

HOUSING COMMISSION

DRAFT MEETING NOTES – February 13, 2020

Attendance			
	Present		Present
Arthur, Ben	Y	Serfis, Karen	Y
Berkey, Eric	Y	Sims, Charles	Y
Blank, Rolf	Y		
Bray, Holly	Y	Staff:	
Browne, Paul	Y	Franklin, Joel	Y
Edwards, Laura Saul	PHONE	Planning Comm. Liaison:	
Gee, Evelyn	-		
Hogan, Alice	Y		
Montgomery, Anika	Y	Disability Advisory Comm Liason	
Norris, Haley	Y	Ray, Doris	Y
Quist, Dannielle	-		

Held in: Courthouse Plaza, 2100 Clarendon Blvd, Room 311

Other Staff Present: Melissa Danowski and Yoomie Ahn of the Housing Division, Department of Community Planning, Housing and Development (CPHD).

Public Comment

No public comment.

Approval of Notes

Holly Bray moved approval of the January 16, 2020 notes, Rolf Blank seconded, and the motion passed unanimously with Charles Sims abstaining.

Arlington View Terrace

Staff Presentation

AHC is requesting \$7,257,000 in AHIF loan funds and \$984,000 TOAH funds (total \$8,241,000 County funds) to redevelop a portion of Arlington View Terrace (AVT), an existing 77-unit committed affordable (CAF) apartment community near Columbia Pike (Attachment 1). The newly redeveloped building, Arlington View Terrace East (AVTE), currently contains 30 units and will be redeveloped into a new 77-unit building (124 total CAFs at the property).

AHC is also requesting a Revitalization Area Resolution for the purposes of the VHDA tax credit application. According to the Qualified Allocation Plan (QAP) for 2020, VHDA will award application points to LIHTC projects located in a “Revitalization Area” as defined by Virginia Code §36-55.30:2. The proposed resolution will designate the entire AVT property as a Revitalization Area, thereby allowing the new construction CAFs within the site to seek the Revitalization Area points in their tax credit application.

Commission Questions and Discussion

Eric Berkey said that the majority of those at the Bricks and Mortar meeting voted to support the project, realizing that it is a tight funding project for AHC to do and there isn't much affordable

housing on this area of the Pike except for the Wellington. Ben Arthur said that he was the one person to vote against the project and said it was nice to see the map in the presentation where the CAFs are, but what the map didn't show is that this is the poorest census tract in the County with two to three times the poverty rate. He added that there are already a number of market affordable units there and that this is not the best place for CAFs and asked why this need to go forward right now. John Welsh said that the County is growing and the number of MARKs are not keeping up with the number needed. This is an opportunity for us to have a presence in this area of the county and people need high quality affordable housing now and the supply isn't keeping up with the demand. He also noted that the density was curtailed during the process and the reduced height was considered a compromise with the neighborhood. Melissa Danowski said that changes are coming to this neighbored such as the Trove where a three bedroom is renting for \$3,200 and new townhomes are selling for \$600,000 - \$800,000, this is a mixed income neighborhood. Rolf Blank asked what the neighborhood issues were, and John Welsh said that it was traffic and what was going on with the connection on 12th street and what is being permitted for bus drop-offs. He said that they already realized the reduction in height during the Form Based Code was what they got out of the planning process.

Laura Saul Edwards said that she is in favor of the project and will vote yes, she is curious to hear the capacity of the community room and John Welsh said that it is about 1,000 square feet. Holly Bray said that she is in support of the project and noted that the site currently has a use restriction and can't go market anyway and they are also getting Federal funds for the rents and that there are 17 years left on the contract for 30 of the units. Charles Sims also noted his support for the project. Paul Browne noted that this is a substantial increase in the number of bedrooms and that all the three bedrooms are new. Paul Browne said that he commends AHC for this project and expressed his amazement at their commitment and noted the large investment by AHC into this project. Eric Berkey said that he also shares Ben Arthur's concerns on a macro level and the County should consider the placement of affordable housing, but this is a place where the County needs more affordable housing. Alice Hogan said that she is wondering about the relocation plan and if there will be enough spots for people and John Welsh said that is being worked out, AHC has a number of properties nearby and have done projects four times this size and they are confident they can make it happen. Alice Hogan noted the proximity of this site to Amazon and it will have a bullseye for a desirable place to live and she said that not having to purchase the land and to get new units here is a huge plus. She also said that she disagrees with the geographic distribution argument and that Arlington is a small County and everywhere is gentrifying very fast. Anika Montgomery asked if AHC will pay for all the moving expenses for tenants and John Welsh said that is correct. Paul Browne noted that this property won't have a tenant assistance fund, but in this case the Housing Choice Voucher subsidy will cover that.

The Commission advises the County Board to approve the request for \$7,257,000 in AHIF and \$984,000 in TOAH to AHC to assist with the development of Arlington View Terrace East. The Commission also advises the County Board to adopt the Revitalization Area Resolution to designate the Arlington View Terrace property as a Revitalization Area. The Commission vote on the motion was 9-1-1. Members in favor are Mr. Berkey, Mr. Blank, Ms. Bray, Mr. Browne, Ms. Edwards, Ms. Hogan, Ms. Montgomery, Ms. Serfis, and Mr. Sims, with Mr. Arthur against and Ms. Norris abstaining. Mr. Arthur voted against the motion because he feels no CAF units should be added in this census tract that has a comparatively higher poverty level than the rest of the County.

FY 2019 Affordable Housing Master Plan Annual Report

Staff Presentation

The implementation highlights included new standards for Accessory Dwellings; work on the Housing Conservation District; start of the Analysis of Impediments to Fair Housing; starting the Housing Matters Forums; changes to the Housing Grants Program (increase to Maximum Allowable Rent); and work on digital equity. The County added 255 new CAF units, bringing the total number of CAFs to 8,375. All of the CAFs financed through AHIF in FY 2019 will be affordable for 75 years and 130 of the 255 new CAFs are family-sized units consisting of two or more bedrooms. Four first-time homebuyers were assisted through the Moderate-income Purchas Assistance Program (MIPAP). Provided rental assistance to 1,479 households through the Federal Housing Choice Voucher program and 1,196 households through local Housing Grants and 564 households received eviction prevention assistance.

Commission Questions and Discussion

Rolf Blank asked how the leveraging works noted in the report and Joel Franklin said that for each dollar of AHIF loaned in FY 2019 it brought in \$7 in other sources. Eric Berkey asked when will the Commission be briefed on the AI and Joel Franklin said this fall. Doris Ray asked if the report highlights accessible units and Joel Franklin said that it does. Ben Arthur noted that the percentage of accessible units with people with disabilities in them seems like a mismatch. Joel Franklin said that staff will continue to look at this, it could be a supply issue where we are creating too many or it could be a matching issue. Alice Hogan said that she thinks we should continue to build accessible units given the aging population.

FY 2021 Budget Recommendations

Staff Presentation

The County Board provided direction to the County Manager in preparation of the FY 2021 budget. In the are of affordable housing this included:

- Include options to increase funding for the Affordable Housing Investment Fund by at least \$3 million and \$5 million and \$9 million above the FY 2020 level of \$16 million through the use of ongoing and one-time funds.
- Include recommendations for how an increment of new AHIF funds or other Housing funds can be used to support the housing needs of residents making <30% AMI. Such recommendations may include a set-aside for achieving deeper affordability in new CAF projects in FY 2021; loans to refinance (and “buy down” affordability levels) in existing CAFs; and changes to Housing Grants formulas and/or eligibility to serve more residents making <30%.
- Develop proposals for funding, staffing and policy approaches to 1) better monitor trends in rents in Market Rate and Committed Affordable apartments 2) support low-income residents facing housing instability as a result of significant increases to rents and/or utilities. Such proposals may include counseling and tenant services; increased emergency assistance through the County’s eviction prevention fund; legal services; and/or outreach specialists embedded within County agencies, on site (and in partnership) with Arlington Public Schools or within another community partner.

Commission Questions and Discussion

Eric Berkey asked the Commission if there are things that we can include in our correspondence to be more effective in our advocacy. Eric Berkey said that personally he would like to push for the \$25 million. Charles Sim suggested that we go for the maximum, if we start at \$3 million then you aren’t

going to get to \$9 million. Haley Norris said that one of the most compelling arguments is the most recent leveraging of 1:7 and Eric Berkey asked if there are more examples they can include. Ben Arthur said that we should ask for enough money to meet the County's stated production goal. Alice Hogan agreed, and we should state that and agree that the Board should at least do \$25 million and note what DC is putting into affordable housing and that revenue is growing in the County. Eric Berkey said that it would be good to have someone develop some rational and write a letter and Alice Hogan said that she would be willing to write a letter. Eric Berkey said that there are lot of things that the County can't do as far as the market, AHIF is something that the County can do. Alice Hogan said that people are starting to think about housing as part of the infrastructure, it is an investment. Anika Montgomery asked if anyone is looking at using existing buildings and turning them into housing and Charles Sims said that it is a mixed bag, sometimes it works, but the problem is to get bedrooms with windows and there are issues with plumbing. Rolf Blank said that we should include the argument that this helps to keep our teachers close and not increase their commute.

2020 Housing Commission Workplan

Presentation

Eric Berkey went over the draft 2020 workplan and said that this will be an action item in March. He noted that the workplan includes that the Housing Commission intends to increase its collaboration with a variety of stakeholders in 2020, all with the goal of better integrating adjacent concerns and issues into housing discussions and better informing the Commission's recommendations to the County Board. The Housing Commission will work with the County Board and County Staff to identify policy areas where the Housing Commission can provide its knowledge and experience to provide a positive impact upon the policy process. These areas may include, but are not limited to: the Missing Middle Study; the review of the Affordable Housing Master Plan; and continuing efforts with the Housing Conservation District.

Commission Questions and Discussion

Charles Sims said that he would like to get an understanding of the NOFA process, how its worked and what impact has it had. Charles Sims said that he would also like to focus on increasing density and that we should have a serious discussion on this. Alice Hogan said that it would be good to talk to developers about the backlog in the NOFA and possibly show the demand for AHIF in the budget letter. Eric Berkey said that it would be better for this to be added to the workplan and not get sidetracked on the NOFA for the budget letter. Rolf Blank said that he agrees about having a discussion on density, especially as an education piece. Holly Bray suggested looking at how we are doing moving people up and out of the building, we should look at figuring out a way to open these units up by bettering their life and financial situation. Paul Browne said that the problem there is where they are going to move and part of that is encouraging missing middle. Doris Ray said that she applauds the goal of moving people on, but it is all about stable housing and don't want to imply that there is a time limit. Holly Bray said that she didn't mean it as a time limit, but we haven't really looked at how we help our residents. Rolf Blank said that all of our nonprofits do resident services such as financial literature and he suggested looking at all the data to see how we are doing and connect the data across all the different projects.

Holly Bray said that we should research 18-year old's getting out of foster care. Alice Hogan suggested that it would be good to have a joint meeting with Tenant Landlord Commission and possibly with the Planning Commission to have a discussion on how we can open the channels of communication. Karen Serfis said that she is interested in talking with other advisory bodies in other jurisdictions, she thinks that there is a lot we can learn from them. Eric Berkey said that he met with Michelle Krockner, chair of the Alexandria Housing Affordability Advisory Committee, and they talked

about having a joint meeting and maybe writing a letter to both the City Council and County Board on the top three items discussed. He said that he proposed possibly meeting with them in the summer. Alice Hogan suggested reviewing the Affordable Housing Ordinance requirements. Paul Browne suggested looking at ways to increase our participation in the SPRC, at least the ones that are appropriate to housing.